

It's going to be one of those days

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Michael Jackson wasn't the only pop star to have a dalliance with self-indulgent movie-making vanity projects. Our other Prince of Pop, Paul McCartney, in 1984, assuming the world deserved a feature-length musical blockbuster solely dedicated to the supremely salient subject of himself, delivered exactly that. More specifically, a glimpse into A Day in the Life of the former Beatle affectionately known as Macca. It wasn't called 'When Narcissists Attack', as appropriate as that might be.

'Give My Regards to Broad Street' is a thinly veiled effort to disguise a never-ending medley of music videos as a genuine screenplay bound together with one of those story-arc-plot-thingies. You can watch it in its entirety on YouTube in 15-minute chunks ripped at fabulous 360p resolution, so I won't be posting too many pictures. Alternatively, there's a DVD release, though no 1080p Blu-ray disc available.



The title is a play on words alluding to Broadway as well as London's former railway station at Broad Street. It was demolished in 1986 to prevent Paul from filming a sequel. Still, I may as well take a look, it's All I've Got To Do.

Naturally, Paul plays himself; the project was orchestrated to launch the wannabe actor back into thesbianism, and no-one knows *you* better than *you*. It had been 14 years since his last proper movie appearance, rehashed gig footage notwithstanding. Plus, as revealed in various interviews, he enjoyed the experience immensely and was keen to give it another whirl... whether his fans were clamouring for a comeback or not. Luckily he's living legend, hall of fame fixture, Paul McCartney, or he'd be gently persuaded to depart the industry... with Deliverance-style pitchforks!



Being the humanitarian chap he is, Paul has recruited 'going straight' ex-criminal, Harry, as a personal assistant, entrusting him with the transmission of the master tapes for his latest album. All he had to do was drop them off at the production plant where they'd be duplicated and distributed to the Beatles' droves of fans.

Shock! Horror! Harry is MIA along with the tapes, leading the band's shareholders and unscrupulous financial backer, Rath, to suspect subterfuge. If Harry isn't apprehended and the tapes recovered by midnight, the corporation expects to lose in the region of £5m - £6m, provoking Rath to foreclose their entire operation. Personally, I don't know why it matters, All You Need Is Love. I said as much to Paul.

"Baby, You're a Rich Man", I told him. "Money can't buy you love".

Suddenly offended, "Don't Bother Me, it's For the Benefit of Mr Kite!", he roared, flipping his flappers like a Walrus. I Feel

Fine, though that won't stop me consulting a lawyer. He won't know If I Fell. I wasn't going to Let It Be.

Paul believes Harry is determined to keep his nose clean following release from jail, thus nonchalantly sets off to investigate. Myself, I'm not convinced, Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except Me and My Monkey.

Mr McCartney is so laid back he entirely forgets that the band's livelihood is at stake. Before we can say, "What? No more Beatles? Again?", Macca et al drift off into music video puff-piece territory. Yes, obviously that's how musical theatre works, except usually the sing-song routines envelope appropriate expositional narrative, and if well-conceived, the transitions feel subtle and smooth. One compliments the other and the concepts gel.

With GMRTBS the pretence is dropped from the outset as each song blends seamlessly into the next. On one occasion Paul even forgets to set lyrics to the music, leaving us to absorb a long, drawn-out Dickensian montage that goes nowhere before being discarded as quickly as the core tracklist arrangements.



Starring a cast mostly comprised of non-actors with barely a napkin worth of dialogue to deliver, Broad Street has to be the worst movie I've watched and enjoyed over twenty times. By 'watched' I mean stuck on in the background while I'm doing something more productive so I can listen to it like a continuous audio album. As pointless and far-removed from a celluloid masterpiece as it is, we should keep in mind that Broad Street is bursting with reinterpretations of classic Beatles and Wings hits, so it's hardly torture to experience them again in a new format. 'Yesterday', 'For No One', 'Eleanor Rigby', 'Here, There and Everywhere', 'Silly Love Songs', 'The Long and Winding Road', and 'No More Lonely Nights' being the most melancholily memorable for me personally.

Even the downtrodden vagrant knows how to carry a tune! You should hear his rapid-fire, upbeat Yesterday cover. You'd swear it was Macca himself. ;)

Unfortunately, the album is padded out with several dreary turkeys, especially the new material. They remain so whether

you listen to them from a CD or watch them on DVD. Odd that Macca would be marinading poultry what with him being a vegetarian. If I never hear 'Ballroom Dancing' again in my lifetime...

Fast-forwarding to the finale, since there's no more plot to speak of, we learn that Harry accidentally locked himself inside a deserted maintenance building at the Broad Street railway station whilst searching for the toilet, and never had any intention of bootlegging Paul's unreleased album at all. All's well that ends well then. Plus, the whole incident was a dream in any case, so there would be no repercussions either way. Yawn.

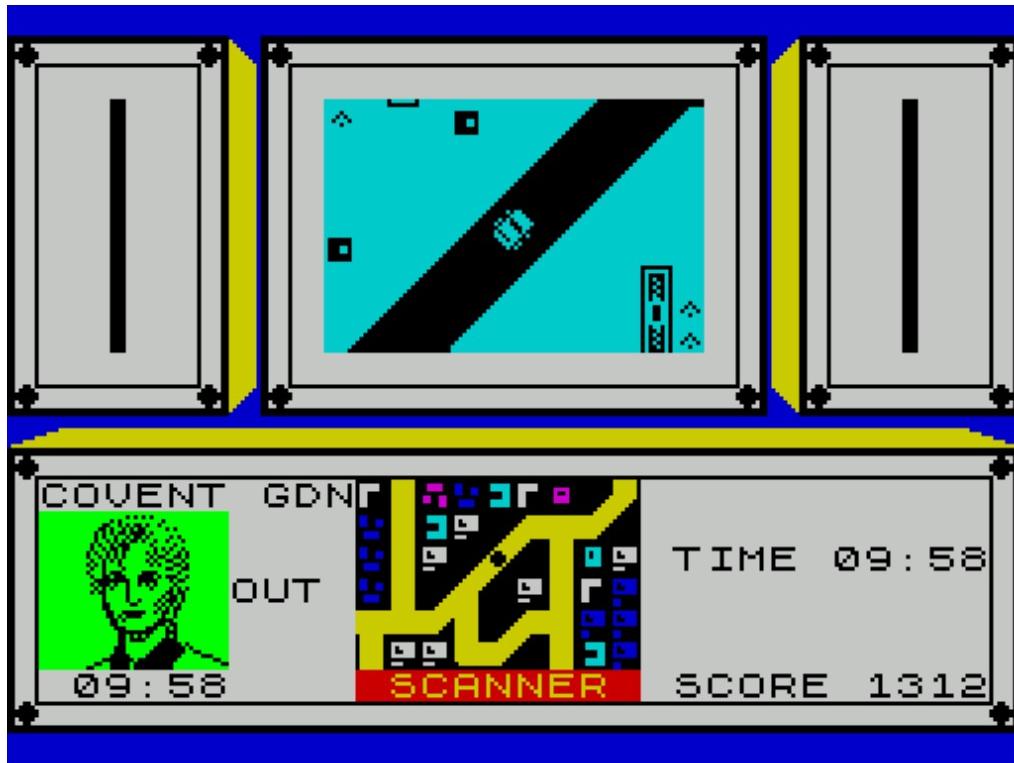
Broad Street was a £9m megaflop, clawing back just £1m at the box office, while subsequent album sales made it all worthwhile financially. Publishers, Argus Press Software, perhaps thought that milking a few of Paul's iconic songs, 8-bit style, would hold similar appeal amongst the gaming fraternity. Thus in 1985 a Speccy/Commodore officially licensed playable title based on the entity Roger Ebert dejectedly described as a 'non-movie' was born. Keep playing those Mind Games, for-ev-eeer, pushing the barriers...

"Argus inform us that the game has been okayed by ageing ex-Beatle Paul McCartney, presumably because the plot of the game closely resembles the film. In other words, little happens and it's corny."

Sinclair User (three stars, July 1985)



It's as much of a 'non-game' as you'd imagine. A primitive top-down driving excursion revolving around the collection of 10 missing chords that comprise the only track Paul failed to recover from the mystical glowing blue box seen in the movie, 'No More Lonely Nights'. A bit of artistic license was called for here since Paul's dilemma only involved tracking down a single person, and was neatly resolved on the silver screen. Almost by accident that is, because no-one involved could think of an interesting way to wrap up the unintentional disaster movie. Consequently, Concept Software - the game developers responsible for recreating the 'magic' on the small screen - felt it necessary to fabricate the movie's conclusion to introduce a slight twist on the original objective. My Guitar Gently Weeps.



What the game *doesn't* emulate is 'Rupert and the Frog Song', the animated short that preceded Broad Street at the cinema. Accompanied by the Frog Chorus and Rupert Bear, Paul's 'We All Stand Together', as featured in the cartoon, reached number 3 in the UK singles charts in 1984. Next to the main event, it played second fiddle to, it's practically Citizen Kane. Joining the dots with a plotline would have helped in that regard. The BAFT certainly thought so when they presented it with an A.

"Another game for those who like to think fast while playing a furious arcade game. Recommended."

ZX Computing (5 out of 5, August/September 1985)



Where were we? With the new album complete, the band members and production crew call it a day and toddle off home for the weekend to enjoy a few cocktails by the pool. Then catastrophe strikes; one of the tracks has gone astray so must be re-recorded post-haste to meet the release schedule.

Another metaphorical puncture; Paul is suffering from amnesia, can't remember how it goes, and therefore needs an emergency rendezvous with each team member to refresh his memory. A Little Help From My Friends Paul might say.

In the Speccy version, we hear a rendition of the entire No More Lonely Nights track whenever the game is paused, which Macca would know if he'd actually played it.

That's not likely so we'll have to step in to help instead. Though with all these nasty adversaries to contend with it's a shame we're not packin' a Revolver. I'm sure I could Carry That Weight; Happiness Is a Warm Gun. You'll have to Run For Your Life otherwise.

Racing against the clock, as well as out-running 48 voracious traffic wardens and 'meanies' (Mr Mustard?), we have just 15 hours to stalk seven targets to recover the track's chords. Or is it 12 or 14 hours? The various cassette inlays and adverts can't agree on a figure. Whatever the case, we'll only be a Day Tripper. Should have all these loose ends tied up by teatime so we're not toiling Eight Days a Week. Other games would have us Working Like a Dog until we all collapsed into Golden Slumbers.



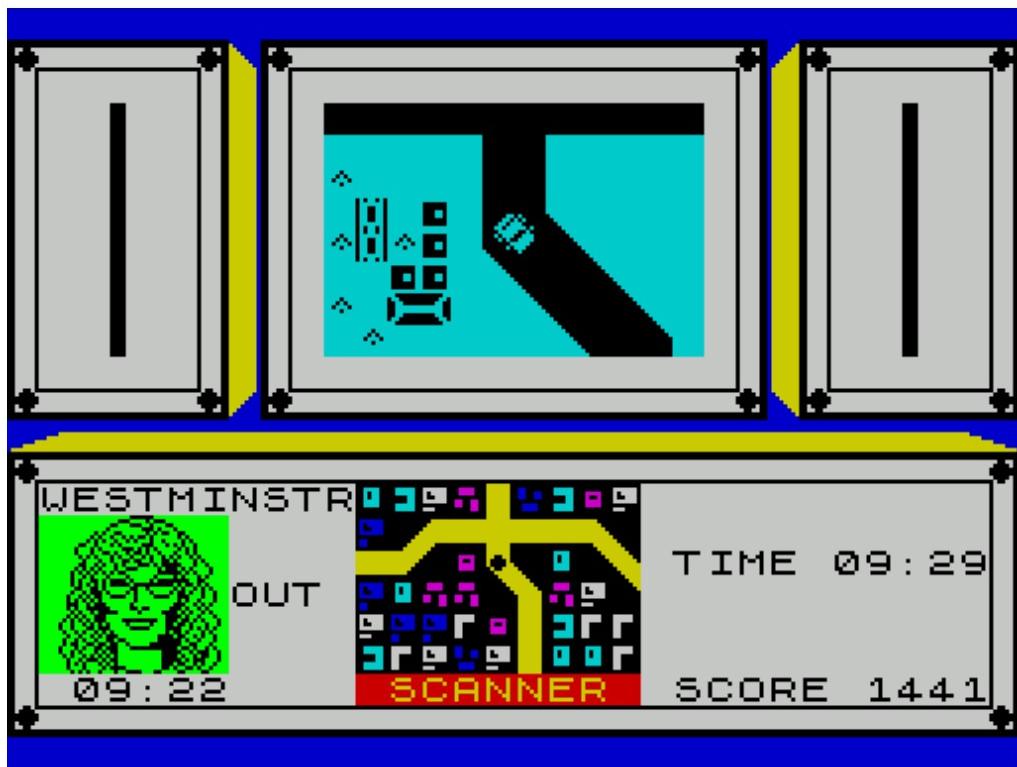
Achieving this goal entails wrapping our head around the poster-sized, authentic, sprawling map of London (found folded up inside the game's box) in order to navigate to locations in which our chums are expected to appear. A treasure map of sorts depicting 943 screens representing 125,720 square feet of the capital city found within the game. Quite a feat of programming and artistic dedication!



Hey Jude, Hold Me Tight, I'm scared. It's enough to make Miss Lizzy Dizzy, without a Helter Skelter. We're not in Kansas City any more. I suppose it could have been worse, if we had to distribute our Regards Across the Universe! Even just the USSR would be a tall order.

"Londoners certainly have a built-in advantage over everyone else. After all, if even Paul McCartney has not noticed that there is no tube at Broad Street, what chance is there for anyone else?"

Sinclair Programs (78%, July 1985)



As we peruse London's landmarks in our 1955 Ford Popular (check out St. Paul's cathedral for instance), a faithful rendition of Band on the Run accompanies our Magical Mystery Tour. It plays incessantly with zero variation! Catchy and recognisable, it'll still drive you round the bend. Maybe if we could slink away from that damn car radio we'd get some rest bite. With a Ticket to Ride, I could Dig a Pony. I'd gallop through Strawberry Fields, canter along Penny Lane, and never Slow Down. Unless I got distracted by a Glass Onion and had to dismount to peel back its intriguing layers, or crashed into a roadworker Fixing a Hole.



"Overall, the McCartney game should be a top ten hit."

Computer and Video Games (9 out of 10, June 1985)



"I didn't find the game particularly good. Although having a large playing area, it will take a lot of getting used to with its maze of streets and roads. Playability is spoiled by the tricky controls of the car. Without clairvoyance, crashing into anything and everything becomes a way of life. Frustration soon overcomes the desire to finish the game."

Julian Rignall, Zzap (65%, May 1985)



Predicting our Beatley cohorts' travel plans necessitates scrutinising the biographies of Linda McCartney, Ringo Starr, Barbara Bach (actress and Ringo's Honey Pie), manager Steve, George Martin et al, and subsequently synchronising our arrival at up to 95 underground tube stations.



All the information we need is detailed on the reverse side of the map, which is handy. George Harrison wasn't involved with the movie at all. He hadn't been asked because Paul knew what his answer would be; George was always more partial to pure, unadulterated music rather than chasing the limelight through frivolous spin-offs. Ergo he's similarly absent from the game. As is John Lennon, having been assassinated four years earlier.

Help! Should we require further clues, our car's onboard computer will kindly update us on their current activities, much like Michael Knight's pal, KITT. This isn't something the coder conjured up, it features in the movie... in Paul's daydream driving sequence.

Fail to master the art of precise timing to acquire all the chords within the allotted timeframe and Rath takes

possession of Paul's multimillion-pound empire. Game over, career over. I'd make some ingeniously witty quip about being forced to return to his former, lowly career as a dustbin man or whatever, except... go on, Ask Me Why. Well, Paul played in bands from the tender age of 15 so never had to slum it along with the rest of us.

"It's an original idea for a game, but it's pretty dull in the playing. It might offer a painless way for prospective cabbies to learn about London - but if this is how pop stars spend their time I think I'll hang up my guitar."

Your Spectrum (2 out of 5, July 1985)



With the full tune lodged safely in our (amnesia-addled) memory, we Get Back to Abbey Road studios to re-record 'No More Lonely Nights'. How exactly this is achieved isn't documented so has to be established through trial and error mixer desk tweaking. *Shrug* I don't know, twiddle with Every Little Thing. If it's Getting Better you'll know you're on the right track. This isn't the musicians' job anyway. Don't we

have audio engineers to take care of this sort of menial task? I'm a pop idol super-mega-star for Lucy's sake!

"It took six ex-Imagine programmers three months to write this game - and a superb job they made of it. The 900 screen map of London is a masterpiece. I would put a slight question mark over the lasting interest of Broad Street, but it's a value for money package at £7.95. Good game, shame about the film."

Commodore User (4 out of 5, April 1985)



As a whole, the retrieval saga seems tough at first leading you to assume you're in for A Hard Day's Night, until it dawns that the band members always appear at the same locations, at the same time. In effect, once we've beaten the game and jotted down the details of their whereabouts, reruns can be completed in under twenty minutes, assuming we have the holy grail map to hand. We probably wouldn't want to repeat the exercise anyway, Not a Second Time.

"The game is excellent and highly recommended."

Home Computing Weekly (Forgot to print scores despite detailing range?, April 1985)

Without this elaborate cheat-sheet, we're up London creek without a black cab wondering how We Can Work It Out, simultaneously then serving as an appropriate copy protection system. Whether anyone would have cared enough to photocopy it to accompany their pirate cassette is debatable.

A very brief debate culminating in a 100% certain, no! Constituting a non-game inspired by a non-movie devised by a non-screenplay-writer starring non-actors, this cabbie training simulator was never going to incite pop-pickers to queue round the block at John Menzies upon day one of its release.

According to Your 64 magazine (3 out of 5, June 1985), "For unreclaimed Beatles fans only". All Together Now, huh? I wonder if Prudence gets their drift. I'll write to her. Whatever, life goes on, Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da...